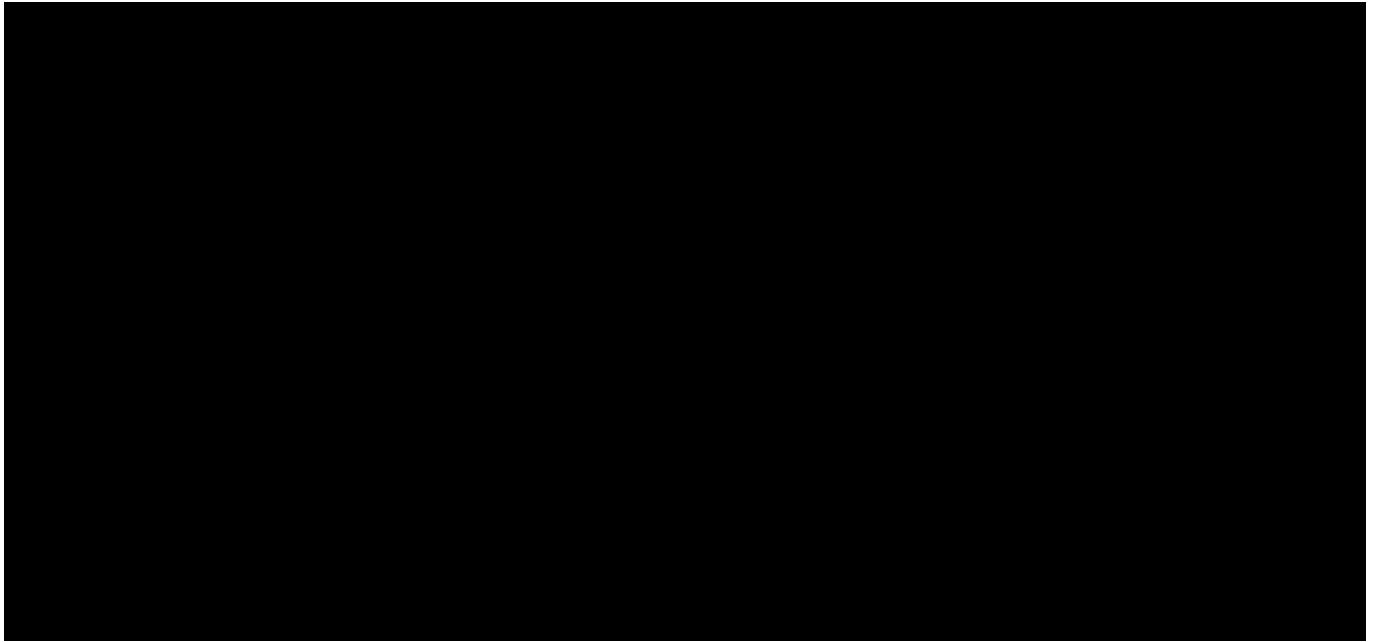


## Hamas: Rafah demo reflects level of Gaza suffering



The Hamas Movement on Tuesday said that the female demonstration at the Rafah crossing earlier today coupled with the sit-in staged by patients reflected the "real suffering" of the Gaza inhabitants due to the suffocating siege.

Hamis in a statement asked the world not to be deceived by Israeli attempts to portray a rosy image in Gaza after supplying it with simple quantities of fuel. The Movement urged the Palestinian people and the Arab and Islamic masses to press ahead with their rallies and activities in solidarity with Gaza in a bid to lift the siege on it once and for all. The world should not be deceived into believing the IOA claims that resistance missiles were the reason for the crisis, Hamas said, highlighting that occupation is the source of all problems and resistance was only an act of self-defense.

The Movement, in this regard, expressed utter dismay at statements of PA chief Mahmoud Abbas in which he said that the resistance's rockets were the reason for the Gaza siege, charging that such statements only provided cover for more IOA crimes. For his part, Fawzi Barhoum, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza, said that Abbas's statement was in full "collusion with the Zio-American project". He said in a press release on Tuesday that resistance was guaranteed by international laws for all peoples under occupation. Hundreds of Palestinian patients and wounded (some of them with amputated limbs) had staged a sit-in at the Rafah border terminal since the early morning hours demanding access into Egypt to receive treatment.

Later in the afternoon, hundreds of Palestinian women and children headed to the Rafah crossing and tried to break into it but were met with a large number of Egyptian security forces that pushed them back using water hoses and fired in the air in a bid to disperse them. The Hamas Movement had called for the peaceful demo to demand the opening of the crossing. A number of women fainted due to the crowd while others were bruised in the scuffle with the Egyptian border guards. In a similar act but on the northern part of Gaza, hundreds of Palestinians of the 1948 lands arrived at Beit Hanun (Erez) crossing accompanying a number of medical and humanitarian supplies.

Mohammed Zeidan, chairman of the 1948 recompilation committee and one of the participants in the march, told PIC that the demo was intended to stand up to Israel's oppression. He appealed to Fatah and Hamas Movements to unite and return to dialogue, opining that such a siege would never have taken place if there was a strong Palestinian unity.